# UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR **BUREAU OF RECLAMATION**

# **MID-PACIFIC REGION**

# SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

## FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**Greenville Rancheria Water Resources Development Project** 

	FONSI 10-19-MP	
Recommended by:		
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	DESCRIPTION OF THE OFFERIOR	



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In accordance with Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the Mid-Pacific Regional Office of the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), has determined that the approval and associated funding for the construction of two community groundwater wells, one on the Greenville Rancheria (Rancheria) and one in the Community of Greenville, CA is not a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required. This Finding of No Significant Impact is supported by Reclamation's Final Environmental Assessment (EA), *Greenville Rancheria Water Resources Development Project*, and is hereby incorporated by reference.

### **BACKGROUND**

Pursuant to the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) States Emergency Drought Relief Act of 1991, as amended (Drought Act), and other authorities, Reclamation is planning to use \$40 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to fund emergency drought relief projects that can quickly and effectively mitigate the consequences that have resulted from current and future drought conditions in California.

2009 was the third consecutive year of drought conditions in the State of California. Governor Schwarzenegger declared a drought emergency for the entire state. The Rancheria is suffering from the prolonged drought and experiencing severe effects to the health and safety of Tribal members. In compliance with Section 104 of the Drought Act, the Tribe has declared a drought emergency and has requested Reclamation's assistance for the purpose of installing and developing two community groundwater wells to provide a dependable source of drinking water for the Rancheria and the Community of Greenville.

The Tribe is a Federally Recognized Native American Tribe located in Plumas County, California. Due to the Tribal Termination Era of the 1950s, many parcels within the Rancheria were lost to non-native persons, many to non-payment of back taxes. As the Tribe was reestablished in the 1980s, the Rancheria is now a growing population in need of developing former lands to house and form a strong community for the Native population. Currently the Rancheria Water System serves 12 homes (approximately 25 persons) on a year round basis. The Tribal residents that reside on the Rancheria still utilize their original drinking water system (combination of groundwater well and spring source) that once fed the school and surrounding buildings; however, the existing well is fairly shallow and the spring source is known to dry up completely during drought years.

Many other Tribal members choose to live within the community of Greenville, CA. The Greenville Community Water System receives water from the Round Valley Reservoir located on a steep hillside above the town and from a groundwater well (600 feet deep) that produces approximately 60 gallons per minute (gpm). This system serves approximately 571 homes (1,160 persons), the Indian Health Clinics, and the main Rancheria office. The Greenville

Community Water System is a low-producing sole source which has resulted in severe water shortages during times of drought and water quality issues during winter and spring rain events.

The Proposed Action would provide both the Rancheria and the Community of Greenville an alternative source of dependable drinking water which would aid in reducing potential health risks associated with their current operations.

## **FINDINGS**

Reclamation has prepared an EA which analyzes the impacts of the Proposed Action. Based on the analysis in the EA, Reclamation has found that the construction of two groundwater wells would not result in significant impacts to the environment and does not require the preparation of an EIS. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is based upon the following:

- 1. <u>Surface Water Resources</u> The Proposed Action would not increase surface water resources in the project area and in fact would decrease the amount of surface water withdrawn from the Round Valley Reservoir to be utilized by the community therefore benefiting surface water resources in the project area. The Proposed Action would not result in short-term or long-term significant impacts to surface water or the resources dependent on surface water.
- 2. <u>Groundwater Resources</u> The estimated storage capacity of the Indian Valley Groundwater Basin is approximately 100,000 acre-feet and a saturated depth interval of 10 to 210-feet. Groundwater extraction for municipal and industrial uses is estimated to be 100 acre-feet. The limited amount of groundwater that would be utilized by the Proposed Action would not result in measurable fluctuations in groundwater levels or exceed the daily amount that would result in overdraft of the Indian Valley Groundwater Basin. Well standards developed by the California Department of Water Resources would be incorporated to protect the integrity of California's groundwater. Proposed Action would not result in short-term or long-term significant impacts to groundwater resources in the Indian Valley Groundwater Basin.
- 3. <u>Geology and Soils</u> –The proposed well sites are located in pre-disturbed areas with minimal slopes and would not include vegetation removal. In addition, the area that would be disturbed during installation of distribution systems would be temporary and returned to the existing conditions following the completion of construction activities. The Proposed Action would not result in short-term or long-term significant impacts to geology or soils.
- 4. <u>Land Use</u> The Proposed Action would not result in land use changes and therefore, the Proposed Action would not result in short-term or long-term significant impacts to land use in the project area.

- 5. <u>Biological Resources</u> The Proposed Action would not include activities that would be located within, or in close proximity to, waters of the U.S. or their associated riparian habitat and therefore, the Proposed Action would not impact listed fish species or species who inhabitat these areas. The construction activities would be short in duration and the area that would be disturbed during installation of distribution systems would be temporary and returned to the existing conditions following the completion of construction activities. The proposed location for the new wells would be on previously disturbed land and would not include additional vegetation removal resulting in no significant impacts to bird species or their associated habitat utalized for foraging or nesting activities. The CNDDB and USFWS websites were reviewed for the potential occurrence of special-status species. Based on known observations and the absence of suitable habitat, there would be no significant affects to listed species resulting from the Proposed Action (CNDDB, 2010, USFWS, 2010). The Proposed Action would not result in short-term or long-term significant impacts to biological resources in the project area or surrounding area.
- 6. <u>Cultural Resources</u> The Proposed Action is the type of activity that has the potential to affect historic properties. A records search, pedestrian survey, and Tribal consultation were conducted within the project area. The results of this review and consultation with SHPO are pending. The determination of effects of the Proposed Action on cultural resources is pending and therefore cumulative effects of the Proposed Action are pending. The Proposed Action will not be implemented until Section 106 compliance has been completed.
- 7. <u>Indian Trust Assets</u> The Proposed Action would not significantly impact ITAs.
- 8. <u>Environmental Justice</u> The Proposed Action would not disproportionately affect minorities or low-income populations and communities. The Proposed Action would benefit the Tribe, a minority population. There would not be significant impacts to human health or environmental effects associated with the Proposed Action.
- 9. <u>Global Climate Change</u> The Proposed Action would not include any significant change on the composition of the atmosphere and therefore would not result in significant impacts to climate change.
- 10. <u>Cumulative Impacts</u> The Proposed Action would not result in significant cumulative impacts to surface water resources, groundwater resources, geology and soils, land use, biological resources, cultural resources, ITAs, environmental justice, or global climate change.